United Nations A/C.2/60/SR.29

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
8 December 2005

Original: English

Second Committee

Summary record of the 29th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 14 November 2005, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Koudelka ..... (Czech Republic)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 56: Eradication of poverty and other development issues

(a) Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (A/60/84, A/60/115 and A/60/314)

(b) Women in development (A/60/162)

(c) Human resources development (A/60/318)

1. **Mr. Sundaram** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (A/60/314), said that the choice of theme — the centrality of employment to poverty eradication — was intended to raise general awareness of the pivotal contribution of productive employment to poverty reduction and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

2. Statistics showing half of the world's poor to be aged between 15 and 64, and hence of working age, and 61 per cent of the workforce to have been unemployed in 2004 failed to reveal the critical link between work and poverty. In fact, most of the poor in developing countries were not unemployed, driven as they were by the basic need for survival to do any work available, even when it was poorly paid, unproductive and did not raise them above the poverty threshold. While economic growth did lead to poverty reduction in developing countries, it did not always generate a faster rate of poverty reduction; nor was the reverse true.

3. The most crucial factor was not the actual growth rate, but the growth elasticity of poverty, which depended not only on the number of growth-generated jobs, but also on the extent to which they benefited the poor. The moral, then, was that the poor must acquire the skills and assets needed for them to take full advantage of job expansion. Truly pro-poor growth required countries to channel resources into the sectors in which the poor worked and lived and into the assets they possessed and to display sensitivity to the needs of poor women.

4. The report also addressed security and human rights and their links to growth and poverty reduction. It suggested that opportunities for productive work transcended income alone: unemployment and underemployment were widely acknowledged as critical factors in the link between development and poverty, but they were also the root causes, and the result, of insecurity. In the wake of a major conflict or crisis, job creation was crucial for maintaining peace and security, involving people, as it did, in rebuilding and sustaining their communities.

5. Respect for human rights and dignity was an essential element of poverty eradication and the very foundation of access to productive employment. The promotion of basic human rights and social justice and the elimination of discrimination were essential to human dignity, poverty reduction and social and economic development. The key message of the report was that the creation of productive employment must be the focus of macroeconomic policies so that all workers, especially the poor, could secure productive employment in conditions of equity, security and human dignity.

6. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on human resources development (A/60/318), he said that success in lifting developing countries out of poverty and marginalization depended largely on the ability to provide individuals with the means to lead decent, productive lives, to expand their opportunities and to put them at the centre of development. Public-policy approaches should address all the dimensions of human resources development, including a wide range of sectors vital for meeting basic human needs, because social and economic investments had proved to be mutually reinforcing, and investment strategies that involved both forms of investment were likely to trigger a virtuous cycle of sustainable economic growth and development that could better withstand international and economic shocks.

7. The report focused on key challenges and made recommendations concerning economic innovation, the spread of HIV/AIDS, increased competition in international markets, and the pressures of migration. The developing countries must urgently receive international support if they were to implement effective investment strategies focused on both economic growth and human resources development.

8. Studies had demonstrated the important role of women in poverty eradication and sustainable development. Countries must therefore give special

attention to the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the human resources component of their development strategies with a view to ensuring the full participation of women in economic, social and political life.

9. Another challenge was the "brain drain", driven by the lack of job opportunities at home and the increasing international demand for skilled labour, the shortage of which in key sectors in the industrialized countries' economies had triggered an exodus of professionals from the developing to the developed countries. The former had become major providers of skilled labour, with all that it implied for their future economic prospects. Despite the transfer of knowledge and technology and the remittances that flowed from migration, the overall impact on their economies was negative. Cooperation and partnership were needed if all countries were to benefit from skilled-labour mobility. A more equitable distribution of the benefits of skilled-labour migration could be achieved through "brain circulation" — or short-term migration — which would reduce the losses to the developing countries, and through boosting economic opportunities in those countries in order to reduce migration incentives.

10. The report also addressed the role of knowledge, science and technology and the public sector and underscored the assistance given by United Nations agencies to countries endeavouring to develop their human resources.

11. **Ms. Hannan** (Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on women in development (A/60/162), noted that the number of women in the labour force had risen from 1 billion in 1993 to 1.2 billion in 2003. However, they were more likely than men to work in the informal sector, which was characterized by lower wages and insecurity of contracts, benefits and social protection. Indeed, 60 per cent of the world's 550 million working poor were women and, because of their disproportionate share of unpaid household chores, many of them were obliged to work part-time.

12. Women were usually relegated to jobs that prevented them from attaining managerial status. Women in the service sector worked mostly in community, social and personal services requiring fewer skills than the male-dominated financial and business services. They were also in demand in labour-intensive service industries because they supplied cheap, flexible labour; but global competition had made for a general lowering of their wages and had limited their bargaining power. Although the flexibility of teleworking had opened up new opportunities for women, who could now work from home, the fact that they teleworked in addition to their domestic chores imposed a double burden on them, compounded by their need, in most cases, to provide their own computers and pay for electricity and Internet service. Also, many migrant women worked in health-sector jobs that followed time-honoured gender stereotypes and paid less than typical male jobs. A further problem was women's "de-skilling", whereby many highly educated women from developing countries undertook unskilled or semi-skilled work.

13. Policies must enable both sexes to benefit from service-sector opportunities, mitigate the negative effects on women and focus on gender-related human-rights protection. Other areas of international migration and development in which a gender-sensitive approach would be appropriate were remittance procedures, trafficking in persons, and information and communication technology, especially the impact on rural women.

14. **The Chairman** invited Committee members to ask questions or make comments.

15. **Ms. Haycock** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union, suggested that the Assistant Secretary-General and the Director should offer advice on tailoring the recommendations in the respective reports to the requirements of countries with a high incidence of HIV/AIDS, especially in the light of the feminization of the pandemic and countries' need to invest simultaneously in the health and service sectors.

16. **Mr. Sundaram** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development) said that HIV/AIDS-related problems, especially with regard to younger people of working age, raised many serious challenges. Dependency rates changed dramatically with a high incidence of HIV/AIDS, since most victims could no longer contribute to the economy and became increasingly dependent on the family or extended family. AIDS orphans were often taken in by grandparents with greatly diminished income. All the implications of HIV/AIDS for poverty reduction were

not yet fully known, despite attempts in some countries to assess its impact.

17. **Ms. Hannan** (Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women) observed that it was often women who tended HIV/AIDS patients in hospitals, in the community and at home, a situation which was compounded by their inferior access to resources and other facilities, including the flow of resources for the care of HIV/AIDS victims. Moreover, while girls were often removed from school to help women in their tasks, it was more important for substantial investment to be made in girls' education and to ensure that they completed their schooling not only for their own benefit, but also in the interests of future economic development. The unequal burden of care of children, the elderly and the sick in the context of the pandemic was another topic for study.

18. **Mr. Torrington** (Guyana) asked for comments on the impact of massive migratory movements of skilled labour on developing countries.

19. **Mr. Sundaram** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development) said that important proposals concerning the future of migration, especially that of skilled labour, were currently being discussed by experts and others. Both general restrictions on migration and specific restrictions on recognition of the skills possessed by migrants, especially professionals, had an impact on the framing of migration policies.

20. One recent proposal advocated "brain circulation" — as opposed to "brain drain" — whereby skilled or professional workers could migrate for a finite period, at the end of which they would be required to return home. While other variations on that theme had been discussed, little had yet been said about the possibility of stemming such emigration or of compensating developing countries for the cost of training skilled workers or professionals who chose to emigrate.

21. **Ms. Hannan** (Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women) noted that many women were now migrating for work, rather than simply to follow husbands or family members. Those women contributed significantly to the countries of destination through their work and to the countries of origin through remittances and other forms of support. On the positive side, migration empowered women and increased their development potential when they were exposed to new ideas as well as earning money. In addition, women remaining at home when men migrated assumed new roles and family responsibilities, including the responsibility of administering the remittances received.

22. The negative factors, however, included the loss of migrant women's skills to the home countries, the harsh working conditions the women often encountered, the aforementioned "brain drain" and "de-skilling" of professionals, not to mention the violence to which women might be subjected. Indeed, the Third Committee had recently adopted a resolution concerning violence against migrant women workers. There was also evidence — albeit anecdotal — that many women systematically remitted a part of their earnings at great personal sacrifice and did not invest in their own education, health or food security, a problem that would need to be addressed in the high-level dialogue scheduled to take place during the General Assembly in 2006.

23. **Mr. Leglise-Costa** (France) said that the two concepts that work must be productive and must be a source of decent employment were mutually reinforcing and should be addressed in tandem. Noting that there was a fair degree of system-wide convergence regarding the decision to make employment — especially decent employment — a central objective in national and international poverty-eradication policies, he asked how the United Nations system could help to implement it, given that every country had its own situation and priorities. The heads of State and Government had also decided that by 2006 each country must establish national development strategies incorporating the Millennium Development Goals and other goals, affording yet another opportunity to mainstream the productive and decent employment goal. The various components of the United Nations system must begin to provide the necessary support.

24. **Mr. Sundaram** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development), responding to the previous speaker's question, said that the United Nations system promoted the concept that national development strategies should include macroeconomic policies that placed sustained focus on the creation of decent and productive employment. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs consistently endorsed the work of the International Labour Office, particularly in the area of employment generation, which continued to be a

major focus of the Department's work. The Division for Development Policy Analysis and the Division for Social Policy and Development worked assiduously on the subject of employment generation, the theme of various reports issued by the Department and the basis for the technical cooperation assistance provided to the Governments of some developing countries.

25. **Ms. Hannan** (Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women) said that the Commission on the Status of Women would be addressing the economic advancement of women at its fiftieth session in 2006, when issues related to decent work, such as occupational segregation, wage gaps and other forms of discrimination would be examined. Millennium Development Goal 3 on reducing gender disparity in education included the employment of women among its indicators. United Nations entities were already supporting Governments in employment issues and stressing the importance of mainstreaming employment issues and integrating gender perspectives in all aspects of national strategies.

26. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) drew attention to the statement he had made in celebration of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty in October 2005, in which he had spoken of lack of consistent action in fulfilment of the promise to lift the poor out of poverty. As the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) drew to a close, it was disheartening to note that poverty had actually increased in the poorest and weakest segments of the international community, the least developed countries.

27. The report of the Secretary-General on the interrelated dimensions of poverty and the efforts made towards its eradication highlighted the key elements for the attention of the Committee. Although developing countries had in general made progress in reducing poverty since the previous decade, extreme poverty had drastically increased in sub-Saharan Africa, which had the highest level of working poor. Although the least developed countries had made strides in creating an enabling environment for poverty eradication, including extensive economic and governance reforms to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and mobilize additional domestic resources, the results fell far short of expectations. Freedom from their debt burden and increased external resources for development to generate employment were the critical elements that would help rid the least developed countries of the scourge of poverty.

28. He drew attention to the characteristics of the working poor in developing countries, as identified in the report of the Secretary-General, namely, the feminization of poverty, the preponderance of poor people in agriculture and in the increasingly informal nature of employment and work. After referring to the International Year of Microcredit, 2005, he praised microcredit as an effective tool for poverty reduction which contributed to the creation of employment, empowerment of women and development of human resources.

29. **Mr. Blake** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, observed that the daily poverty threshold of $2, below which 47.9 per cent of the world's workers and their families lived, was lower than the subsidy paid for a cow in Europe and the United States. The *Report on the World Social Situation 2005: The Inequality Predicament* revealed a global increase in the number of people living in poverty compared with the late 1990s.

30. The Group agreed with the Secretariat that employment was crucial to growth and poverty reduction, but, additionally, urgent attention should be given to encouraging the poor to undertake entrepreneurial ventures in order to create their own employment and build wealth. In addition, the factors that robbed them of income from their produce should be addressed: policies having a detrimental effect on prices for output, wages and savings and constraints on public sector expenditure, particularly in rural areas, must be reviewed. In short, as a number of experts had explained to the Committee, many current policies were working against the poor.

31. In order to tackle the major challenge of poverty, such issues as decent employment, access to resources for entrepreneurial development and international trade, monetary and fiscal policies must be addressed. The Group endorsed the view expressed in the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/314) that policies for poverty reduction should promote both faster growth and growth with higher elasticity. Given the dynamic nature of poverty creation, however, and the short time left in which to achieve the internationally agreed poverty reduction target, there was a need for more

proactive responses by the international community. The recommendations of the Secretary-General therefore needed to be strengthened to enhance access to productive resources and encourage entrepreneurship and enterprise development, to increase international cooperation and coherence between international policies, especially trade, fiscal and monetary policies, and make them pro-development and consistent with national objectives, and to enhance human resources capacity for higher, more creative and productive employment.

32. Turning to the subject of women in development, he noted that the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/162) focused on the benefits received and the challenges faced by women especially in the growing services sector and the gender perspectives of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). It contained a number of conclusions, which should be carefully evaluated for further action.

33. On the subject of human resources development, he welcomed the insightful approach of the report contained in document A/60/318, which recognized the cross-sectoral and comprehensive nature of human resources development and its role in achieving national development and the internationally agreed development goals. The Group wished to draw special attention to the issues and challenges raised in respect of the migration of highly skilled and educated persons. There was clearly incoherence between national and international policies, as developed countries actively recruited or welcomed highly skilled and educated persons without consideration for the level of investment by developing countries in their training and, at the same time, refused to consider wider labour movement within GATS. The recommendations in the report on converting "brain drain" into "brain circulation" in order to create a virtuous cycle for development deserved serious consideration, and some of the issues should be addressed in the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in 2006.

34. **Mr. Duong Hoai Nam** (Viet Nam) said that his Government shared the view that the fight against hunger and poverty should be at the forefront of the international agenda if targets on poverty reduction were to be fulfilled. While there were a number of reasons for the persistence of poverty, the unfair and inequitable international trading system and the lack of financial resources were the main obstacles to the implementation of programmes and projects designed for poverty eradication.

35. International trade was a powerful engine for sustained economic growth and a critical source of finance for development. Distortions in the world market for agricultural products, the main exports of developing countries, continued to undermine the ability of the agricultural sector in those countries to contribute meaningfully to economic development and the fight against hunger and poverty. The phasing-out of agricultural subsidies was a key element for the success of trade negotiations within the World Trade Organization. Viet Nam therefore welcomed the European and United States initiative to reduce export subsidies, a gesture of good faith that must be recognized.

36. Hunger and poverty eradication required a multidimensional approach and action at the national, regional and international level. With official development assistance (ODA) in the short and medium term expected to remain at insufficient levels, an estimated sum of US$ 150 billion was needed annually to meet the goals established in the Millennium Declaration. Viet Nam wished to join international efforts to find new and innovative financing and instruments to complement traditional ODA flows.

37. Since 1993, Viet Nam had reduced its poverty rate by 60 per cent, thereby halving poverty ahead of the schedule set by the Millennium Development Goals. Substantial progress had also been achieved in the provision of free health coverage to 88 per cent of the poor, and 400,000 new houses had been built. As a result of its own experience, the Government was convinced that it was essential to utilize all available resources in all areas, including capital construction, public utilities, investment and human resources development.

38. Peace and security were not achievable in a world in which 1.2 billion people struggled to survive on less than 1 dollar a day. The fight against poverty required comprehensive, systematic effort and more effective mobilization and use of all resources. It was therefore crucial to enhance the effectiveness of United Nations organizations and agencies, especially those involved in development and poverty reduction.

39. **Ms. Oddsen** (Norway), welcoming the report of the Secretary-General on women in development

(A/60/162), said that gender segmentation in the labour market and the poor working conditions, low wages and inadequate security encountered by female workers were issues that must be addressed in order to achieve sustained economic growth and sustainable development. The work of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in promoting opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work was commendable, and she called for the universal ratification of the ILO conventions on workers' rights and gender equality in the labour force.

40. Her delegation agreed with the Secretary-General regarding need to improve the collection of gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data in order to be able to take informed decisions on gender equality in employment. The Secretary-General's recommendations on the elimination of discrimination against migrant women workers must be heeded, if men and women were to derive greater benefit from the empowering and development potential of migration.

41. International migration had important implications for public health systems. Together with the HIV/AIDS pandemic, it was exacerbating acute shortages of health-care workers. Approximately 80 per cent of the victims of human trafficking were women and girls, who frequently suffered severe reproductive health consequences. Her Government therefore urged the United Nations to establish policies and practices to address gender equality concerns and migration from a development perspective.

42. Despite the commitment in the Millennium Declaration that everyone would benefit from information and communication technology, that goal remained a remote hope for the vast majority of people. Moreover, although information and communication technology had produced employment gains, sex segregation in the information economy persisted.

43. The international community should strengthen efforts to position gender mainstreaming, HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health at the forefront of the development agenda. Her Government would intensify its support to initiatives with a clear gender perspective and would increase its contributions to the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM). It would consider favourably other United Nations organizations that placed emphasis on gender equality.

44. Reaffirming her Government's commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2005 World Summit Outcome, she said that, in order to achieve gender equality at the country level, gender perspectives needed to be mainstreamed in all United Nations operational activities. They must permeate such sectors as economic development, environment and infrastructure, as well as education and health. Her delegation looked forward to the report on system-wide gender mainstreaming policy and strategy to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council in 2006, and would strengthen its follow-up on the gender policies of United Nations funds and programmes.

45. **Mr. Hannesson** (Iceland) said that one positive aspect of increased international trade in services was the cross-border movement of persons, which had become the main vehicle for greater participation by women in the export of services in developing countries. The downside of such labour flexibility was often lower wages, the possible loss of formal contracts, social security and other benefits. One of the reasons for the foregoing was that women were more likely to find employment in the informal economy than men. A recent disturbing trend, which must be addressed, was the shift to temporary migration and an increase in undocumented migrants, which often led to illegal trafficking in human beings.

46. Efforts to combat trafficking in human beings should be a priority for all, as most States were affected either as countries of origin, transit or destination. Iceland, for its part, had invested considerable resources in raising public awareness of human trafficking and had hosted three conferences in as many years on various aspects of the problem. Iceland's commitment to the international fight against that scourge was demonstrated inter alia by its participation in a Nordic-Baltic Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings and the financing, since 2003, of the post of a female anti-trafficking officer within the Mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

47. **Mr. Wang** Qi (China) said that while poverty eradication had been recognized time and again as one of the toughest challenges facing mankind, there was still a long way to go in achieving that lofty goal. Countries must shoulder their respective responsibilities and jointly promote global efforts to eradicate poverty. Developing countries must formulate

poverty reduction strategies tailored to their specific circumstances and combat poverty and backwardness through their own painstaking efforts, while developed countries had the duty to render greater assistance to the developing countries by honouring their commitments to provide financial aid, transfer technology, grant debt relief and facilitate market access. International organizations should play a greater role in that regard by ensuring follow-up to international conferences and exploring new ways in which international multilateral bodies could provide assistance.

48. In its efforts to create a favourable external environment for the economic growth of developing countries the international community should: respect the right of those countries to choose their own path of economic development; further improve the international financial system to foster an orderly trade environment and a stable financial environment; promote a sound multilateral trading system that was open, fair and non-discriminatory; and manage globalization in such a way as to ensure equitable development opportunities for people from all countries, thus eliminating the breeding ground of poverty. Since poverty eradication was the common responsibility of society as a whole, Governments, enterprises and civil society organizations should conduct broad-based dialogues, mobilize resources and create innovative poverty alleviation mechanisms.

49. In China, the most heavily populated developing country in the world, the number of people living in poverty had dropped to 26.1 million and the poverty rate had fallen to 2.8 per cent. Nonetheless, his Government was keenly aware that China still had sharp imbalances between urban and rural areas and between regions. In that regard, it would adopt stronger policy measures, strengthen accountability and ensure a timely realization of the strategic goals contained in the Development Platform for Rural Poverty Alleviation. China's effort was an important component of global efforts against poverty. In May 2004, his Government had hosted a World Bank-sponsored world conference on poverty reduction, where it had announced a donation of $20 million to the Asian Development Bank to inaugurate the "China Poverty Reduction and Regional Cooperation Fund". In May 2005, as a follow-up to that conference, the China International Poverty Eradication Centre had been formally established in Beijing; its purpose was, among other things, to explore new theories, strengthen international interaction and promote South-South cooperation. The establishment of the Centre not only demonstrated China's determination to be part of the global fight against poverty but would also contribute to poverty eradication.

50. **Mr. Ben-Tura** (Israel) said that his country was deeply committed to the eradication of poverty and placed special emphasis on enhancing the role of women in development. Micro and small enterprises played a particularly important role in generating new sources of income and ultimately improving the status of women. Microfinance contributed directly towards alleviating poverty and enhancing gender equality. However, credit made available to poor women should be part of a larger mechanism for enhancing their status, such as helping them engage in micro-enterprises. In that context, he referred to a number of domestic and international initiatives pursued by Israel to enhance the role of women in small business development, including through international training seminars, the establishment of government institutions and international cooperation. He also touched on the work of the Small Business Authority and that of the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center. The latter had trained more than 11,500 women from around the world and had been dealing, since 1961, with the issues of concern raised by the Beijing Platform for Action.

51. **Mr. Bouchiar** (Morocco) welcomed the decision by a majority of developed countries to establish a calendar for meeting the target of 0.7 per cent of GDP for ODA, the approval by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank of the Group of Eight proposal to cancel the multilateral debt of some of the poorest countries and the adoption of the World Bank Group's Africa Action Plan. Poverty alleviation, especially in rural areas, was the cornerstone of Morocco's socio-economic policy and a prerequisite for any sustainable development initiative based on equity and the effective participation of the population concerned. It was felt that greater progress could be made with regard to enrolling village girls in schools, reducing the isolation of villages and improving sanitation if such activities were part of a strategy. King Mohammed VI had accordingly launched a National Human Development Initiative in May 2005 to eliminate social and regional differences, combat poverty and promote more equitable and sustainable

development. Poverty could be banished from Morocco only if the major impediments to economic, social and political advancement, including the external debt service burden, the heavy budget deficit and youth unemployment, were addressed. In that regard, he invited the developed-country partners, the United Nations and international financial institutions to become more involved in Morocco's human development efforts.

52. In order to provide the necessary support to countries of the South in combating poverty, the international community must step up its efforts to achieve all agreed international goals, including the implementation of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. Developed countries, international financial institutions and United Nations programmes should help to integrate poor countries into the multilateral trading system and facilitate their access to developed country markets, support the structural reforms undertaken by developing countries and reduce their debt, increase ODA, and meet the specific needs of least developed countries, especially those in Africa, while supporting the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

53. **Mr. Abujela** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that progress in the eradication of poverty had not been equal to the aspirations of the developing and the least developed countries. His delegation was concerned to note that the lack of equality had given rise to instability and to the spread of extreme poverty throughout the world and threatened the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the most important of which was reducing by half the number of people suffering from extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. The worsening problem of external debt had exacerbated the problems of inequality, poverty and hunger. His delegation agreed with the statement in the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/155) that promoting basic human rights and social justice and eliminating discrimination were essential for human dignity, as well as for poverty reduction and improving the human condition in accordance with international human rights instruments and declarations.

54. The achievement of the goal of poverty eradication required more than just high economic growth because the causes of poverty were numerous; the availability of productive work would contribute substantially to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Consequently, the generation of employment should become an essential objective of national and international policies within poverty eradication strategies. The emigration of highly skilled labour from the developing to the developed countries had undermined the economic capacity of those countries, leading to shortages in vital sectors such as health care and education, thus impeding their economic development and also their ability to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

55. His country supported the efforts of the United Nations on behalf of the developing countries, including the promotion of growth and development and the eradication of diseases such as AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1) had emphasized the renewed commitment to the eradication of poverty, continuing economic growth and sustainable development and global prosperity for all. His delegation also emphasized the implementation of that resolution with respect to meeting the special needs of Africa, which was the only continent that had no expectation of achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Concerted and concrete measures were therefore needed to enable the developing countries to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development by becoming part of the world economy and sharing effectively in the process and benefits of globalization.

56. **Mr. Widhya** (Cambodia) said that poverty eradication was a top priority for his Government in its efforts to promote sustainable social and economic growth and maintain political stability. Employment generation remained a critical challenge for Cambodia's long-term development. His Government had tried to diversify the economy and move away from its heavy dependence on agriculture and light industries, particularly textiles, to agro-business and services, particularly tourism. In order to alleviate poverty in rural areas, the Government had introduced a public investment programme to rehabilitate and strengthen infrastructure and expand social services together with a measure to strengthen microfinance services in those areas. It had also undertaken a comprehensive macroeconomic and structural reform programme, including the enactment of financial establishment legislation, and it had recently adopted a Land Act to stimulate private direct investment in the country.

57. While considerable efforts had been made in least developed countries to mobilize domestic financial resources, the international community must remain firm in its commitment to help those countries break the vicious cycle of poverty. In particular, the developed countries must allocate 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their GNP as ODA to the least developed countries by 2010 and increase market access for developing-country products. In that regard, they must remove the heavy agricultural subsidies which were having a devastating impact on the poor subsistence farmers of the South. Concerted efforts and genuine compromises must be made at the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong in order to make globalization beneficial for all.

58. **Mr. Lolo** (Nigeria) said that poverty persisted because of the international community's collective failure to commit its knowledge and resources to the fight against that scourge. The time had come to shift the focus of the international debate from abstract notions of the nature and structure of poverty, which were well known, to the practical measures required to address the challenges of poverty. To eradicate poverty and empower women, economic opportunities, political freedoms and an enabling national and international environment must be provided so that individual initiatives and enterprises could prosper. He supported the call for more comprehensive economic, labour and social policies that promoted economic growth and employment generation. The aim of such policies should not only be to achieve fiscal balances and generate employment, but to also put more power in the hands of the poor through qualitative jobs and decent incomes.

59. Policies must also address the distorting differentials between prices and wages. In that regard, he welcomed the recognition that donor support should focus, inter alia, on the provision of insurance programmes, employment guarantee and price stabilization policies to help stricken countries deal with transient and absolute poverty. Women, who were often marginalized, underpaid and excluded from economic and social opportunities, needed to be given adequate protection and support. It was equally vital to put in place supportive global programmes and coherent and consistent development policies as well as to resolve the external debt crisis in order to pave the way for the achievement of strategic national development objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals. Human development strategies that were integral to national development programmes must take full advantage of scientific knowledge, information and communication technology and multi-stakeholder participation. While Governments had a crucial role to play through, inter alia, increasing spending on infrastructure, health, education and shelter, the United Nations system must also play a leading role in mobilizing international support to that end.

60. **Mr. Siv** (United States of America) said that eradicating poverty was a moral imperative that deserved the sustained attention of the United Nations and all Member States. He hoped that it was no longer taboo to acknowledge the indispensable role in eradicating poverty of competitive markets, which allocated resources efficiently by signalling the relevant information. Economies were fearful of the notion of market failure, but in most places where there was pervasive and extreme poverty markets had failed because Governments had not allowed them to succeed.

61. The idea that poverty could be eradicated by major cash transfers from the public sectors of rich countries to the public sectors of poor countries was not realistic. Eradicating poverty involved increasing productivity, through the accumulation of capital and skills over time. There was much to be gained, too, by removing barriers that held people back from realizing their potential. For example, it was well established that educating girls and giving them equal opportunities led to better health for women and children and to more productive economies. Eliminating discrimination against women was not only a matter of justice, but also good economic policy.

62. **Mr. Ndjonkou** (International Labour Organization) said that ILO based its work in the area of poverty eradication on social justice and the twin concepts of entitlements and equity; achievement of the latter involved developing both economic and social capabilities. The approach used by ILO emphasized that poverty reduction required economic growth with a substantial reorientation in favour of the poor.

63. Experience had shown the relevance and the demand for integrating an employment-centred perspective into poverty reduction programmes and strategies. Poverty reduction must be based not merely

on generating employment, but also on improving the working conditions that had contributed to poverty in the first place.

64. Education and training were a central pillar of the ILO decent work agenda, since skills development was a key element in the promotion of productive employment. Decent work was the best anti-poverty programme and the best route to socio-economic development and personal well-being. It was therefore necessary to improve complementarities between all the different means of action and levels of intervention.

65. **Ms. Chenoweth** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) referring to the International Year of Rice, 2004, said that rice was the staple food for more than half the world's population and could play a role in providing food security and eradicating poverty, which were closely interrelated. Thus, poverty eradication was not achievable without food security and vice versa. For more than half the world's population food security depended on an adequate supply of rice, which had become the most rapidly growing food source in sub-Saharan Africa in the last decade.

66. Increased employment opportunities and income were essential for poverty eradication, and rice cultivation was the principal employment and source of food and income for millions of households in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In addition, the support services for rice-based systems had created additional sources of employment and income for millions of people around the world, and the engine for industrial development in many countries. In Asia, the transformation of rice grains into other products employed a large share of the workforce.

67. However, since 2000, rice production had been lower than rice consumption at the global level, and the land and water resources for irrigated rice production continued to diminish. The declining prices of rice on the international market since 1995 had caused a sharp drop in the return from rice production, which had been one of the major causes of poverty and hardship for many small farmers in developing countries.

68. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that rice-consuming populations were often afflicted with protein-energy malnutrition and vitamin A deficiencies and that the intensification of rice production with inadequate application of pesticides had caused significant damage to agricultural biodiversity and also environmental pollution.

69. More than 800 activities had been implemented in 68 countries throughout the world during the International Year of Rice, which had reconfirmed that rice would continue to be a global food crop on which billions of people depended for their daily energy and protein intake. The sustained increase of rice production and the diversification of rice-based production systems, which were essential for poverty eradication, called for the development of technologies, economic models and investments that kept pace with the changing patterns of human development.

70. **Mr. Kau** (Fiji), referring to the eradication of poverty, said that his Government had set itself the goal of reducing poverty by 5 per cent a year and was focusing on developing an integrated approach to achieve that goal, and also to implement the Millennium Development Goals. However, national Governments could not achieve the Goals without appropriate international support.

71. Market reform was especially necessary, to provide improved market access for developing countries. Equitable trade policies were critical for eliminating poverty. The report of the Secretary-General on the centrality of employment to poverty eradication (A/60/314) had noted that the growth of agricultural productivity was the strongest predictor of the reduction of extreme poverty. But, the agricultural exports of developing countries could not compete on the international market unless the terms of trade were more equitable.

72. Employment alone was not sufficient to eradicate poverty. Developing countries needed to create stable jobs that paid a living wage; but better jobs required a more highly skilled workforce, which highlighted the need for international support for training activities.

73. The report of the Secretary-General on human resources development (A/60/318) had addressed the issue of the migration of skilled workers, which was of special concern to the Pacific Island nations. Fiji called for the establishment of networks linking migrants with their home countries to facilitate the flow of knowledge, technology, investment and trade. The transfer of skills and experience by expatriate businesses and workers could strengthen the capacity of the domestic workforce. Government should be

encouraged to provide infrastructure and incentives to help channel remittances into savings, businesses and investments.

74. The interrelationship of the Millennium Development Goals was particularly evident in the case of women, since gender equity was a cross-cutting theme. The issue of gender wage gaps posed a challenge to development that needed to be addressed. Fiji had established a microfinancing programme aimed at enhancing the social, economic and political status of women.

75. **Mr. Husain** (Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)), referring to the item on women in development, said that the international community had been aware for some time of the adverse impact of the movement towards urban areas on the lives of families, particularly women and children, but, with the emergence of globalization, the movement across international borders had multiplied the risks for vulnerable groups, and social protection for women who migrated in search of employment needed to be reinforced.

76. In accordance with the teachings of Islam, OIC upheld the dignity, welfare and well-being of women and recognized their potential contribution to economic growth and development. A ministerial conference was being planned to consider specific measures to enhance the role of women in societal development and to provide more opportunities for them in public life.

77. While the report of the Secretary-General on women in development (A/60/162) stressed the importance of eliminating discrimination against migrant women in employment in the service sector, there was also a need to combat trafficking in migrants and to protect women and children trafficked for sexual exploitation and coercive adoption.

78. Women required access to credit and to information and communication technology, as well as access to and control over productive resources and market information. To address those and other concerns, the First Forum for Businesswomen in Islamic Countries had been held in March 2005. It had called for providing technical assistance and skills development to improve the expertise of women in different branches of industrial and commercial activity.

79. With regard to the image portrayed in the media of the status of women in the Islamic world, he emphasized that Islam granted equality to women and men in all aspects of social and community life; they could work, save and invest. To adapt to the changing times, OIC member States were reviewing the needs of women with a view to facilitating their constructive roles in the resurgence of Islamic society as it modernized, harmonizing the best of its traditions with the requirements of the contemporary world.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.

United Nations A/C.2/60/SR.30

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
8 December 2005

Original: English

Second Committee

Summary record of the 30th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 15 November 2005, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Koudelka (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Czech Republic)

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Agenda item 57: Operational activities for development (*continued*)

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(a) Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (*continued*)

In the absence of Mr. Wali (Nigeria), Mr. Koudelka (Czech Republic), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 56: Eradication of poverty and other development issues (*continued*) (A/60/79 and 111, and A/C.2/60/3)

(a) Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (*continued*) (A/60/84, 115 and 314)

(b) Women in development (*continued*) (A/60/162)

(c) Human resources development (*continued*) (A/60/318)

1. **Mr. Bodini** (San Marino) said that, despite widespread agreement on the need to eradicate poverty and the devotion of significant resources to that end, the achievement of the relevant Millennium Development Goal was uncertain. Economic growth alone was not sufficient to eradicate poverty. It was of paramount importance for developing countries to establish an effective legal framework for labour and social security so as to improve the quality of existing employment and alleviate the problem of underemployment, while maintaining the necessary flexibility to create new jobs and develop small businesses. Sufficient resources should be devoted to education and vocational training to ensure higher productivity and better pay, and cultural obstacles should be removed so as to ensure that women had full access to the labour market.

2. The amount of resources that developed countries could devote to the eradication of poverty in developing countries depended on their own economic situation. Many industrialized countries, especially in Western Europe, were facing difficult economic conditions and some were experiencing unprecedented social unrest. If unemployment increased in developed countries, owing to the reduction of trade barriers and other concessions to developing countries, their priority would be to take care of the poorest sectors of their own society. Furthermore, the proportion of elderly in the populations of developed countries was growing, with resulting increases in health and pension costs.

3. A balance must be achieved that would not deprive the people of wealthier nations of their well-being, and that would encourage the governments of the most successful developing countries to spread their new wealth more justly and effectively among their own citizens, especially women, and ensure that the people of the least developed countries had the benefit of democratic and transparent leadership to guide them out of poverty.

4. **Mr. Snoussi** (Tunisia) noted that the report of the Secretary-General on the centrality of employment to poverty eradication (A/60/314) was limited to the national context and had not evoked the migratory and trade-related aspects of employment or the brain drain, with its adverse effects on developing countries.

5. Investment in employment-intensive sectors, such as agriculture, was needed in order to reduce rural poverty and marginalization. Investment in the rural economy was a strategic choice with a multiplier effect on production, farm income and food security, as well as economic growth and human development; however, such a strategy required the necessary financial resources and guaranteed market access.

6. Insecurity had its roots in poverty; therefore, with no real possibilities of development, there was a continuous risk of economic and political instability throughout the world. Poverty was the symptom of a global environment plagued by inequality, and the fight against poverty required a global alliance based on shared responsibility, cooperation and solidarity.

7. Official development assistance (ODA) was a catalyst for development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, because development was a long-term process that required the mobilization of financial, human and technical resources beyond the means of many countries. Innovative funding sources were a complement to ODA. In that context, the international community should ensure the operationalization of the World Solidarity Fund, established by the General Assembly.

8. Trade was important for financing development and combating poverty. The development dimension should be made central to trade negotiations, in accordance with the Doha Development Agenda, and the multilateral trading system should be made more equitable and open, bearing in mind the trade priorities of developing countries, particularly the least developed countries.

9. Efforts should be made to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to manage their debt, because growth, human development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals depended on maintaining sustainable debt levels. The international community should identify a mechanism that allowed debt to be cancelled or reduced without compromising the stability of the international financial institutions.

10. **Mr. Baja** (Philippines), referring to the report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on the International Year of Rice — 2004 (A/C.2/60/3), said that the combined efforts of the relevant United Nations agencies, Member States and international organizations had helped to raise awareness of the vital role of rice in providing food security and eradicating poverty. They had also led to increased support for the development of sustainable rice-based production systems, which were essential ingredients of economic growth and development.

11. During the International Year of Rice, the Philippines had intensified its efforts to promote and provide guidance for an efficient and sustainable increase in rice-based production as a means of maintaining the country's rice sufficiency and meeting the challenges of food security. However, sustained international efforts were required to address the many aspects of rice promotion, since rice could play a vital role in ensuring global food security.

12. Most of the more than 80 million people suffering from hunger and malnutrition lived in areas dependent on rice production for food, income and employment. A focus on sustainable rice cultivation was becoming increasingly important in view of the growth in global population and the corresponding escalation in the demand for rice. Proper cultivation and sustainable production of rice would significantly reduce poverty and environmental damage; but the growth in production was declining owing to competing uses of land and water resources, reduced economic returns, high rates of post-harvest losses, increasing labour shortages, institutional limitations and environmental pollution.

13. The bulk of the world's labour force worked in the agricultural sector and three quarters of the working poor were in developing countries. The International Year of Rice would have succeeded when more rice became available, accessible and affordable to urban and rural poor, when farm incomes increased and when additional rural employment opportunities were created.

14. **Mr. Gunasekera** (Sri Lanka) said that, although it was currently addressing the setbacks caused by the 2004 tsunami, Sri Lanka was confident of achieving the Millennium Development Goals ahead of schedule. The Government accorded top priority to education and health; nevertheless, poverty remained a major challenge and development initiatives were being realigned in order to reduce socio-economic disparities.

15. The poor represented a body of human resources with great potential, provided their basic needs were met and they were mobilized to create economic growth. The Government had adopted relevant policies and, in particular, was trying to improve the well-being and incomes of the rural poor through a community-driven development approach, because it considered that the poor themselves should take part in formulating solutions to their problems.

16. Many developing countries had opened up their economies on the assumption that increased trade, rather than aid, would engender economic development. Yet trade barriers were an obstacle to recovery and growth. Consequently, market access on concessionary terms would have a significant impact on poverty reduction and wealth creation. In addition, debt burdens continued to weigh down the economies of developing countries and significant progress must be made at the Sixth World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference to be held in Hong Kong in December 2005.

17. Sri Lanka was actively involved in efforts to improve the status of women and had elected the first woman Head of State in 1960. The literacy rate for women was 97 per cent; there were more girls than boys at all levels of the educational system, and women were well represented in both the public and the private sectors. The Government had directed that all governmental programmes should contain a gender component and that the gender impact of every programme should be assessed.

18. **Mr. Chia** (Singapore) said that, since people were Singapore's only natural resource, the country had invested heavily in education and training. Singapore believed that education was not an end in itself but a means to equip its people with the necessary skills to meet the challenges of their workplace and contribute to national development.

Government bodies had worked closely with the private sector, labour unions and other stakeholders to ascertain the skills required under the nation's economic development blueprints and translate them into targets for educational institutions. The close partnership between industry and education was evidenced by how the country's economy and education system had evolved over the years. With the shift to export-oriented industrialization in the early 1970s, greater emphasis had been given to technical and vocational training; in the 1980s and 1990s, science and technology had been stressed.

19. However, the rapid technological changes and intense competition driven by information and communication technologies, increasing globalization and economic liberalization had introduced new challenges, which Singapore has met with a renewed human resource development strategy, following extensive consultations with all concerned. The strategy aimed to help the people of Singapore remain relevant and competent in the new knowledge-based economy, by encouraging educational programmes to focus on ongoing learning for lifelong skills and retraining programmes.

20. In its human resource development strategy, Singapore had benefited from the technical assistance provided by developed countries and international organizations. It believed in making a contribution in return; therefore, technical assistance aimed at training and increasing skills was the core objective of its international cooperation programme and more than 38,000 government officials from 161 developing countries had received training in Singapore since 1993. While not all Singapore's experiences were applicable, the principles, approaches and institutions adopted were worth studying and could be adapted to other countries.

21. **Mr. Muda** (Malaysia) said that little had been achieved, despite all the recent international commitments and global awareness of the need to combat poverty. The responsibility for poverty eradication rested primarily with national Governments, but they needed support from the international system. Positive economic growth required a conducive and enabling environment. Market access and foreign direct investment would help to promote economic growth and generate productive employment.

22. Growth with equity had always been the thrust of Malaysia's development planning, with emphasis on efforts to enhance income-generating opportunities. It had always recognized the multidimensional nature of poverty and the need for practical and integrated approaches to effectively eradicate poverty. Its development plans were divided into core national policies, and sectoral and industry-specific master plans. Malaysia's poverty index now stood at less than five per cent and, in the coming years, its development policies would focus on reducing extreme poverty to zero per cent by 2009. The Secretary-General's report on the centrality of employment to poverty eradication (A/60/314) had stated that poverty reduction could not be achieved without focusing on the agricultural sector and Malaysia had taken specific steps to raise the income of those employed in that sector.

23. The Government had also provided financial assistance to enable the children of the poor to pursue their education to the university level, because a higher level of education would help them to obtain better employment. Malaysia was also aware that corruption must be eradicated and the public service delivery system improved in order to heighten efficiency and productivity and contribute to poverty eradication and economic growth.

24. Despite national efforts, international technical assistance, ODA and debt relief were still needed to liberate resources that could be directed towards activities designed to eradicate poverty.

25. **Mr. Albader** (Qatar) said that, while global development had made unprecedented progress since the 1950s, a large number of third-world States were experiencing economic stagnation and a large number of people, particularly in rural areas, suffered from poverty, hunger and need. In the wake of the Millennium Summit and the World Summit for Social Development, Governments had committed themselves to providing assistance to rural populations as part of efforts to halve extreme poverty by 2015. The key to reducing poverty was sustainable development strategies that included investment in rural areas and social services. The decline in per capita food production in developing countries would continue unless better access to land, capital, credit, training and technology was provided.

26. Poverty was intimately linked with unemployment. The Secretary-General's report had

shown that half the people currently living in poverty were of working age and that a majority of those who did work in developing countries lived below the two dollar a day poverty threshold. Poverty reduction policies needed to focus on job creation and upgrading skills. Women in rural areas faced special burdens because of their reproductive role and lack of equal access to resources, paid employment, education, and decision-making positions.

27. The Secretary-General's report on human resources development (A/60/318) had noted that escaping the poverty trap required investment in basic infrastructure and human resources that developing countries could not undertake without international assistance. Qatar called on the developed States Members of the United Nations, other development partners in the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions, the private sector, civil society organizations, and non-governmental organizations to increase their investments in developing countries, especially in rural areas. It hoped that the upcoming WTO Ministerial Conference would reaffirm the Doha Round emphasis on free trade in agricultural markets and elimination of all barriers against exports from developing and less developed States. The full and fair participation by rural societies in global development was a prerequisite for achievement of the Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty by the year 2015.

28. **Mr. Dall'Oglio** (Observer for the International Organization for Migration (IOM)), referring to the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/318), said that for several years IOM had been working extensively on the impact of the migration of skilled labour and people with advanced education, which exemplified the complex and contradictory nature of the nexus between migration and development.

29. Migration of skilled workers from developing to developed countries was not always a negative phenomenon: countries with a large population and a broad and flexible human resources base could replace the outflows. In such cases, the brain drain represented a brain overflow and benefits, such as remittances and a vast array of resources, largely offset losses in terms of investment in education and training. However, in countries that were short of human capital and lacked the capacity to replace the loss of their most qualified workers, such outflows were a major impediment to economic growth.

30. Countries of origin and destination, with the help of international organizations, could effectively cooperate to mitigate the negative impact of the migration of skilled workers. Expatriate populations or "diaspora" played an important role in such partnerships and deserved to be encouraged and sustained in their effort to maintain ties with home countries, through human and financial networks. IOM had developed several programmes to foster such ties, enhancing the mobility of people and resources, which translated into returns, investment and establishment of microenterprises and job creation.

31. There was a growing interest in cooperation between countries of origin and destination. Regional frameworks and regional and interregional consultation on migration issues also offered additional opportunities in that respect. IOM was fully engaged in ongoing international efforts to turn the brain drain into a brain gain through the transfer and infusion of knowledge, skills and technology into home countries.

32. **Mr. Talbot** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member States that were also Members of the United Nations, said that the Caribbean region was among the areas in which improvement was needed in fighting extreme poverty and hunger. The rate of economic growth was insufficient to achieve significant progress but, in spite of their trading, environment and health vulnerabilities, countries of the region recognized their responsibility to work towards their own development and improve the living conditions of their people. It was a moral obligation for the international community to do its utmost to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the goal of eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, and CARICOM member States welcomed various initiatives by donors to establish deadlines for ODA targets.

33. He recognized the contribution of microcredit to the fight against poverty and said that CARICOM member States continued to advocate partnerships for providing greater access to microcredit and microfinance by the poorest sectors.

34. The Fourth World Conference on Women had identified the eradication of poverty among women as an integral component of poverty alleviation strategies. Caribbean women were still disadvantaged: in addition to opportunities for improving their living conditions,

they should be given greater access to education, skills training, health care and employment.

35. Poverty in the Caribbean was generally characterized by large income disparities and was linked to a high rate of unemployment. Education was a critical tool and leaders of the region were striving to provide universal access to all levels of education and to upgrade educational standards. He also acknowledged the centrality of employment to poverty eradication, the need for sustained investment in long-term human resources development, and the adverse impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the brain drain on the scarce human resources in the region.

36. The negative effects of globalization had continued to widen the economic and social gap between the developed and developing countries, increasing inequality of income and opportunities. Governments in the Caribbean region had opened their markets, observed good governance and encouraged technology transfer in an effort to make globalization and trade liberalization positive factors.

37. CARICOM member States noted with satisfaction the determination of world leaders at the 2005 Summit to ensure the timely and full realization of the development goals and objectives agreed at the major conferences and summits. The need for action to eradicate world hunger and poverty and to offer decent and humane living conditions was all the more urgent in an age of advanced technology and improved living standards.

38. **Mr. Atiyanto** (Indonesia) said that practical action was needed to follow up the initiatives agreed at the 2005 World Summit and to monitor their implementation.

39. While developing country governments were responsible for their own development, based on national conditions, sovereignty and priorities, their efforts would be meaningless without an effective and stronger voice in international economic and decision-making and norm setting. A commitment for an open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system must be made. The Sixth WTO Ministerial Conference would contribute in a number of areas that would help developing countries to achieve sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

40. Highlighting the importance of migration and technology transfer, he reiterated the commitment of Indonesia to poverty eradication. The Government had a plan to boost economic performance and promote the development of the rural economy and agriculture for poverty alleviation. It was also implementing a pro-poor strategy that favoured growth and employment. The reduction of government subsidies for oil had released funds for quarterly cash subsidies to assist the poor. Microcredit, gender issues and the fight against corruption were also being promoted.

41. Indonesia continued to address the special needs of other developing counties within the context of South-South cooperation, through various regional and interregional mechanisms, and through tripartite arrangements in collaboration with donor communities.

42. **Mr. Ahmed** (World Tourism Organization) said that the conversion of the World Tourism Organization into a United Nations specialized agency was further recognition of the potential of tourism to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The stakeholders of the tourism industry could not remain indifferent to the question of poverty. Furthermore, there was evidence that sustainable forms of tourism lifted vast numbers of people out of poverty.

43. Illustrating the economic role of tourism in developing and least developed countries, he said that developing countries had 19.3 per cent of total international tourism receipts. Tourism was the main export in one third of all developing countries, and a major foreign exchange earner in the least developed countries. Moreover, growth in international tourist arrivals had been faster in the developing world than in high-income countries, particularly between 1990 and 2003.

44. In addition, tourism was one of the few industries in which most developing countries had a comparative advantage over developed countries. The considerable expansion of tourism activities, even to isolated destinations, and the important linkages of tourism with other economic activities explained why tourism was particularly well placed to meet the needs of the poor. In addition, tourism was highly labour-intensive, requiring little training, and provided jobs for all, including women and young persons. Barriers to establishing a new small enterprise in the sector were quite low, which had led the World Tourism Organization to conduct research on the possible role

of microfinance in the development of small and medium-sized enterprises in tourism and development in poor areas.

45. However, poverty reduction through tourism would not be automatic; it required willingness by a strong political leadership and firm private sector commitment to assume their social responsibility to destination countries, local communities and workers. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the World Tourism Organization had launched the concept of sustainable tourism as a tool for poverty elimination.

46. Governments should integrate sustainable tourism development in national poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs), as recommended in the Declaration on Tourism and the Millennium Development Goals, adopted on the eve of the 2005 World Summit. The Declaration also drew attention to the crucial role of tourism in small island developing States and other tourism-dependent developing economies.

47. **Mr. Wagle** (Nepal) said that poverty reduction, being a multidimensional issue, must be addressed in a coherent manner and at all geographical levels, especially with regard to the developing and least developed countries.

48. Poverty eradication remained the sole objective of his country's current economic development plan, which focused on broad-based economic growth, social sector development, social inclusion with targeted job creation programmes, and good governance through efficient public service, community participation and decentralized government. Emphasis was placed on people-centred policies and fair distribution of opportunities and benefits, and programmes to eradicate gender discrimination, putting Nepal on track towards the Millennium Development Goal of halving extreme poverty by 2015. However, disparities between rural and urban populations persisted, and terrorist activities had undermined development efforts. A programme was in place to increase human security, eliminate corruption and deal with related issues.

49. A long-term programme had been designed to enhance the agriculture sector, which was beset by low productivity and underemployment, and a land bank was being established to allocate land to landless peasants and freed bond labourers in order to promote productive use of farmland. The Government was also creating jobs at home and seeking employment opportunities abroad; the latter remained a fundamental component of Nepal's employment policy, with remittances from young Nepalese sustaining the economy and providing an alternative source of household income.

50. However, poor countries could not tackle poverty alone, but required increased aid, debt relief, capacity-building support and an equitable multilateral trading system to spur growth. The international community must support efforts to replace the vicious circle of underdevelopment, unemployment and violence with a virtuous circle of peace, development and productive employment and to make economic sectors benefit the working poor. With the elimination of apparel quotas in January 2005, Nepal's garment exports — a major foreign exchange source — had declined by 39 per cent, and over 60 garment industries had closed down, with the loss of 50,000 jobs.

51. Poverty-stricken countries needed markets to be opened up in the areas of their comparative advantage as well as technology transfer and more funding assistance for education and vocational training. Their surplus low-cost unskilled labourers should be allowed cross-border mobility in order to help lift their families out of poverty, which remained the most daunting challenge to countries' collective wisdom. The world's poorest were still grappling with poverty and widening inequality, and with pledges unfulfilled. Combined and concerted efforts in the context of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty could achieve development and prosperity for all.

52. **Mr. Sadykov** (Kazakhstan) said that his Government assigned priority to poverty eradication, employment of women, aid to poor families, development of small and medium-sized businesses, and large-scale social programmes. Under its poverty reduction programme for 2003-2005, the proportion of poor had been reduced from 34 per cent in 1999 to 16 per cent in 2004, thus meeting relevant Millennium Development Goal. A series of social reforms begun in 2005 would be completed in 2007, and the National Programme of Health Care Reform and Development for 2005-2010 had been launched. The country's macroeconomic policy would determine the criteria for wage growth, adjusted for inflation, to keep pace with growth in labour productivity in order to ensure that households genuinely benefited from economic progress.

53. Regarding human resources development, the State awarded scholarships for the top 3,000 college students to study in the world's leading universities. Women were increasingly present in the labour force, and effective mechanisms were being developed to integrate them more fully into social and political life and increase their representation at all decision-making levels; women currently filled 60 per cent of public sector posts, and close attention was being paid to their economic advancement.

54. A microcredit scheme in which two thirds of the beneficiaries were rural women was being promoted, and the Government would continue to give priority to providing the poor with financial resources, including an enhanced microcredit framework. The contribution of cooperatives to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals was widely recognized; they had been instrumental in enabling the poor, especially women, to fully realize their productive potential. Kazakhstan also had a microcredit scheme for vulnerable groups and first-time entrepreneurs.

55. Economic development called for policies that addressed potential sources of instability and the wide gap between rich and poor in access to health care, education and participation in social activities. Kazakhstan's goal was a modern, competitive economy in an open, democratic and prosperous society based on the rule of law, wherein the components and traditions of a multinational, multidenominational society could coexist in harmony.

56. **Mr. Bhagwat Singh** (Observer for the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)) said that the delay in eradicating poverty had been aggravated by the increase in natural disasters, conflicts and disease, and called for greater commitment from the international community. Poverty could be reduced only if ecosystems were conserved and properly managed. There was a direct link between the health of ecosystems and food security, improved health, asset-building, risk reduction and more secure lives for the poor. Conversely, land degradation, desertification, pollution and unequal access to water and productive ecosystems diminished human well-being.

57. IUCN had launched the Conservation for Poverty Reduction Initiative creating a broad alliance of governmental and civil society organizations to restore and conserve ecosystem services essential for ensuring sustainable livelihoods. Poverty reduction funding and Millennium Development Goal planning must mainstream water-related issues and better management of fisheries and agricultural lands, and the rights of the poor to lands and resources must be secured.

58. Women's unequal access to many key resources impeded their contribution to economic development. Gender equality was critical to poverty reduction and the conservation and sustainable use of resources. Research on the gender aspects of the use of natural resources had shown women to be central to any successful anti-poverty strategy. However, although women were largely responsible for food security and health care in the home, they enjoyed limited access to education, income and capital- and asset-building. IUCN had long recognized gender inequities in natural resource use, as highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/162), and had actively integrated the issue into its conservation work in support of the poor; it would also contribute to making the World Summit commitment to further actions for eliminating gender discrimination a reality.

59. **Mr. Salazar-Pineda** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the structural inequality between North and South was part and parcel of poverty. The systemic causes of poverty were rooted in the current international financial architecture, whose neo-liberal conditionalities rendered the goal of poverty eradication illusory. The voices of the developing countries must be heard in the international financial institutions and a fair, transparent, development-centred international trading system based on complementarity must be installed, with particular respect for the principle of special and differentiated treatment for developing countries.

60. Poverty was a social phenomenon comprising many qualitative facets, the causes of which must first be understood and then addressed. The fight against poverty was essentially political and his Government, which was based on participatory democracy, involved citizens in decision-making on public plans and programmes designed for the exercise of their most fundamental right, the right to rise out of poverty. In his country, human rights were political and participatory rights, enjoyment of which was a necessary step towards the construction of a free, just and equitable society.

61. His country's efforts to boost production included: microcredit; incentives to small and medium-sized enterprises; promotion of the formation of cooperatives, especially by women; revival of inactive businesses; land distribution; and financial and technological support in rural areas. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had been declared an illiteracy-free territory by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), following literacy campaigns with wide national coverage. The education component of national programmes covered comprehensive day-care centres, school construction, and generalization of all levels of education; the health component, having strengthened the primary medical care system, was making progress on comprehensive medical and hospital care and had achieved a substantial drop in infant mortality.

62. There was no single model of development, just as there was no single model of democracy. His country was convinced that the principal cause of poverty was inequality and the power structure that sustained it both within nations and internationally. Accordingly, the core problem to be addressed was not just poverty, but also wealth and its concentration in the hands of a few. The struggle against poverty must come from the poor themselves, not from the elite or the marketplace.

Agenda item 58: Training and research

(a) United Nations Institute for Training and Research (A/60/304)

(b) United Nations System Staff College in Turin, Italy (A/60/328)

63. **Mr. Boisard** (Executive Director, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Institute (A/60/304), said that 2005 had been a good year, both operationally and financially. The Institute's activities had increased considerably and, while it had launched no new initiatives or programmes, areas in which it could provide useful contributions had been strengthened to provide more durable training. The number of beneficiaries had increased with the use of e-learning in an increasing number of courses and, finances permitting, short courses on certain aspects of training developed at UNITAR would be made available on CD-ROM.

64. The Institute's programme rested on two main pillars: the first, accounting for about one third of its activities, comprised training in multilateral diplomacy, management of international affairs and preventive diplomacy, as well as programmes for diplomats or delegates accredited to the United Nations, a series of scholarship programmes in international law and conflict resolution, and correspondence courses on peacekeeping. The second, much larger, pillar comprised social and economic capacity-building; not only was the Institute the training arm of many environmental conventions, it also conducted smaller programmes responding to specific needs in international trade, external debt and financial management.

65. Reference to four main themes would illustrate the conformity of the Institute's activities with the Outcome of the recent High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly. The first was the global partnership for development: all UNITAR programmes were prepared in close coordination with one or more bodies both within and outside the United Nations system, enabling the Institute annually to design over 150 workshops, seminars and programmes benefiting some 10,000 participants and 15,000 students following correspondence courses.

66. UNITAR had been one of the main training agents for the implementation of international legal instruments relating to the environment, first and foremost the Conventions on Climate Change, Desertification and Biodiversity and the Rotterdam and Basel Conventions.

67. Financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the European Union and bilateral donors, the Institute's training programme on the implementation of the Framework Convention on Climate Change was carried out in close cooperation with the secretariat of the Convention, in permanent consultation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Under UNITAR auspices, three world-renowned specialized centres — in Colombo, Dakar and Pretoria — were developing an integrated approach to analysis of policies on climate change and sustainable development, in which each partner shed expert light on specific issues. The long-term objective was to encourage South-South cooperation, train trainers and increase the developing countries' capacity to make their voices heard in the global climate change debate.

68. UNITAR also provided training in infrastructure for the sound management of chemicals and wastes: national profile development; capacity-building; risk-management decision-making; integrated national management programmes; pollutant release and transfer registers; and a globally harmonized system of classification and labelling of chemicals. The training was developed in consultation with the relevant United Nations agencies and funded by GEF and bilateral donors, especially Switzerland. The Institute assisted with integrated national programmes, helping countries to identify gaps in their infrastructure and set priorities. Over 120 States had directly benefited from its activities, and many industrialized countries had adopted its methods.

69. Concerning the peaceful settlement of disputes, in addition to the programme in peacemaking and preventive diplomacy, a programme for briefing and debriefing of the Secretary-General's special representatives and envoys served to build up "institutional memory" and strengthen operational efficiency. There was also a programme on the specific needs of women and children in and after conflict, and inexpensive correspondence instruction in peacekeeping operations was also available on CD-ROM.

70. Thanks to the UNITAR partnership with local and municipal authorities and businesses, cities and municipalities worldwide currently focused on a number of specific social issues, including HIV/AIDS. There were currently 12 UNITAR-affiliated training centres on four continents, dispensing training in close coope ition with relevant United Nations agencies and regional and international associations of cities and local authorities. Other activities included the preparation, with UN-Habitat, of a doc:ment on access to essential services and a study on local government infrastructure financing with the World Bank; private businesses contributed special expertise and some funding to joint workshops on subjects such as water management. UNITAR had been an organizer of the recent World Summit of cities and local authorities on the information society to prepare the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society about to meet in Tunis.

71. In association with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Institute had launched a series of seminars to train parliamentarians in their responsibilities and role in sustainable development and universal access to essential services. In the new context of international relations, local authorities, civil society and the private sector would play a larger role in a globalizing, decentralizing society seeking justice and equal opportunities.

72. The Institute's success was due to its precise methodology and the flexibility of its action. Its financial situation was generally satisfactory, and bilateral donors seemingly approved of its capacity-building activities. However, the level of voluntary contributions to the General Fund was too low for the training services UNITAR offered to representatives accredited to the United Nations headquarters offices and insufficient for the extension of those services to other host cities. UNITAR was the only body providing training in multilateral negotiations, public speaking and the drafting of resolutions.

73. Despite its considerable efforts, the Institute had been unable to win over major donors, who perhaps mistakenly believed that its services were not a priority. The issue of whether the United Nations should defray the costs of the Institute's rent and maintenance remained unresolved after years of debate. Although training and institutional capacity-building were important for sustainable development, surprisingly the only United Nations organ devoted to providing them was also the only one that was self-financing, with no financial support from the Organization.

74. **Mr. Ceratto** (Acting Director, United Nations System Staff College), introducing the report of th. Director on the College's work, activities and accomplishments (A/60/328), noted that in 2004 the threshold of 10,000 participants had been reached and passed. Training of United Nations country teams took up the lion's share of the College's work; the programme targeted first-time United Nations resident coordinators and coordination officers, conducted strategic planning retreats to bring the Common Country Assessment process to life and finalize the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) strategy. The College expected to assist in the completion of 39 UNDAF exercises in 2005, compared with four in 2002. As a result of the training programme, United Nations country teams were more focused on the priority Millennium Development Goals and were more effective in the planning and implementation of those goals. That illustrated what the College could do when it had adequate and

predictable funding and pursued targets agreed with the sponsor.

75. The second largest area was the peace and security programme, which had trained staff from the Secretariat, United Nations funds and programmes, specialized agencies and elsewhere. Financed by only three donors — Germany, the United Kingdom and Sweden — it had organized 64 training events since 1998 and trained over 1,500 participants. Over 200 staff members had been trained in 2004 and 2005. He invited more partners to provide further support for the launching of a multi-year programme in the area of peace and security. While training or learning were not the answer to all problems, they could help produce a well-trained workforce that could deliver multilateral solutions with unity of purpose. Member States should support the College in its efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the human capital of the entire system with a view to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

76. **Mr. Blake** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, noted that UNITAR had recorded a significant increase in the number of training initiatives undertaken. The Group of 77 and China particularly appreciated the Institute's effort to assist Member States in building capacity for the sound management of chemicals and waste as well as to support the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in programmes relating to vulnerability, adaptation and mitigation. He also hailed the work of UNITAR in preventive diplomacy. The Institute's expanded number of programmes addressed issues of significant priority to developing countries.

77. The Group of 77 and China supported the Secretary-General's recommendation for UNITAR to continue to expand its training and capacity-building programmes and to cooperate with the specialized institutions within the United Nations system in that regard. Welcoming the Institute's improved funding position, he noted, however, that long-term financial viability was still a concern. Member States, in particular the developed countries, should increase their contributions to the General Fund, taking into account the successful restructuring and revitalization of the Institute and its efforts to comply with the recommendations of the Board of Auditors as well as the importance of training. He urged Member States to seek an expeditious resolution of the issue of rental and maintenance costs of the premises used by UNITAR. The Group of 77 and China would also support the recommendation for the agenda item "Training and research" to be examined every two years by the General Assembly, instead of the current practice of annual reviews.

78. **Mr. Anaedu** (Nigeria), expressing his delegation's firm support for UNITAR, said that the Institute could not provide the services that Member States often demanded and expected if its resources were derived mainly from earmarked funds, usually with stringent conditionalities and from a very narrow donor base. UNITAR should be treated like other institutions within the United Nations that enjoyed rent-free and maintenance-free services. If need be, the relevant article of the Institute's Statute should be amended to allow it to be funded from the regular budget of the United Nations.

79. It was not clear what the programme in "environmental democracy" was intended to achieve. UNITAR should concentrate on its core programmes that brought the greatest benefit to the wider membership, rather than pursuing programmes premised on nebulous, controversial concepts. The "environmental democracy" programme should therefore be discontinued. It was equally unclear why UNITAR should single out oil as the only commodity that generated important revenues for central governments. He asked whether UNITAR would also design programmes for the equitable management of services and commodities in developed and developing countries where there was agitation for the equitable sharing of resources as a means to promote communal peace. Such programmes, in the political and economic domain, were beyond the competence of UNITAR, which should confine itself to better managing its limited resources within its core programmes in order to win and sustain the confidence of donors.

80. **Ms. Quintavalle** (Italy) welcomed the training provided by the Staff College to United Nations country teams and expressed strong support for its activities in strengthening the capacity of staff in the area of conflict prevention and early warning, especially in Africa within the framework of NEPAD. The College's training policy combined know-how with specific competencies of many different players, thus contributing to system-wide coherence. One of the College's main functions had been training United Nations staff in the field, which should continue. At the same time, in view of the need to enhance the

Organization's management culture, it should also devote attention to training staff at the headquarters of the various United Nations bodies. A well-trained, educated staff could provide more effective multilateral solutions in the areas of development, peace and collective security.

Agenda item 54: Globalization and interdependence (*continued*)

(d) Preventing and combating corrupt practices and transfer of funds of illicit origin and returning such assets to the countries of origin (*continued*) (A/C.2/60/L.29)

Draft resolution on preventing and combating corrupt practices and transfer of funds of illicit origin and returning such assets to the countries of origin

81. **Ms. Gordon** (Jamaica), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/60/L.29 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that it relied heavily on the agreed language of the previous year's resolution on the topic, but had been updated to take into account the impending entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. She hoped that it would enjoy broad support and urged its adoption by consensus.

Agenda item 52: Sustainable development (*continued*)

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (*continued*) (A/C.2/60/L.27)

(f) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 (*continued*) (A/C.2/60/L.28)

Draft resolution on natural disasters and vulnerability

82. **Ms. Gordon** (Jamaica), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/60/L.27 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that it was similar to the previous year's resolution on the same topic and endeavoured to convey the impact and ferocity of the increased number of natural disasters in recent months, as well as the underlying risk factors and vulnerabilities in many countries.

83. Paragraph 3 of the text should read: "Stresses the importance of the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters and the priorities for action that States, regional, international organizations and international financial institutions as well as other concerned actors should take into consideration in their approach to disaster risk reduction and implement them, as appropriate, to their own circumstances and capacities, bearing in mind the vital importance of addressing the adverse effects of natural disasters in efforts to implement their national development plans and to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;". In paragraph 5, the word "vulnerable" should be moved and inserted between the words "those" and "among", while the words "that are" should be deleted. She hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution on promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the implementation of the World Solar Programme 2006-2015

84. **Ms. Gordon** (Jamaica) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/60/L.28 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. It was similar to the previous resolution, but had been updated to take into account both the Secretary-General's report, which credited the World Solar Programme with significantly raising global awareness about the increased role of new and renewable sources of energy in the global energy supply, and current thinking in that area. The draft was requesting a 10-year extension for the Programme. In paragraph 7, the words "International Conference on" should be inserted before the word "Renewable", with a comma being added after "2005". She hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Agenda item 57: Operational activities for development (*continued*)

(b) South-South cooperation: economic and technical cooperation among developing countries (*continued*) (A/C.2/60/L.31)

Draft resolution on South-South cooperation

85. **Ms. Gordon** (Jamaica), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/60/L.31 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that it attempted to highlight the many significant events that had taken place in the context of South-South cooperation, including the Second South

Summit and the fourteenth session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation and their respective outcomes, as well as initiatives at the national, regional and international levels. She highlighted in particular paragraphs 16 and 17. Referring to paragraph 15, she noted that "of 23 December 2003" should be inserted at the very end after "58/2". She hoped that the draft would be adopted by consensus.

Agenda item 55: Groups of countries in special situations (*continued*)

(a) Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (*continued*) (A/C.2/60/L.32)

Draft resolution on the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries: high-level meeting on the comprehensive global review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010

86. **Ms. Gordon** (Jamaica), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/60/L.32 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that it addressed the need to advance the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action as well as preparations for the 2006 high-level meeting on the comprehensive global review of the Programme's implementation, as reflected in paragraphs 5 to 9. In paragraph 6, the word "for" should be replaced with the word "to". She hoped that the draft would be adopted by consensus.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.